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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE:

July 12, 1959

SUBJECT: Kozlov Visit: Interview with Averell Harriman,
Place: residence, 16 East 81st Street, New York.

PARTICIPANTS: First Deputy Premier Kozlov;
Ambassador Menshikov;
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter;
Mr. Harriman;
Admiral Kirk;
Heyward Isham, Department of State

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(Note: At this informal, private meeting arranged at Kozlov's residence, note-taking by a Department officer seemed inappropriate. The following is based on notes made immediately after the conversation and a separate interview with Harriman.)

1. Impressions of US

In response to Mr. Harriman's question, Kozlov said that his trip had been "very useful". The Gary works of U. S. Steel and the Indiana Harbor works of Inland Steel represented "the last word in technology"; the Homestead District plant of U. S. Steel in Pittsburgh, however, was obsolescent, having frightful dust and deplorable lighting. In the USSR older plants like Homestead were scheduled for reconstruction. Harriman conceded that Homestead was of course one of the oldest steel plants in the US and inquired whether it was due for remodeling. Kozlov said he did not know but had the impression it was not, since he doubted that such an investment would be considered profitable by the company.

Kozlov went on that he had not neglected light industry, having visited a toy plant near New York (the Ideal Toy Corporation, Jamaica). He had been interested to observe the large number of women employed at this factory. This observation led to a rather pointless debate, in which the Admiral joined, about the prevalence of female labor in the US as compared with the USSR. Kozlov first asserted it was about the same as in this country, but upon being challenged by Harriman, he admitted this might not be so, but in any case he had not meant to imply that there was anything wrong with a large female labor force.

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- 2 -

Kozlov continued that earlier that day he had visited the Empire State Building, the subway, and the UN building. The subway, Harriman commented, was much inferior to the Moscow metro, and the ventilation was bad. Kozlov nodded that this was indeed so, and the ventilation was worthless. Kozlov added that when at his press conference this noon he had been asked if he believed, with Khrushchev, that our grandchildren would live under Communism, he had replied "Yes, as Communists we do believe that, although this is of course an internal matter for the United States". Harriman retorted, "You think our system has within it the seeds of its own destruction, and we think the same of your system. Let us then wait and see who is right. Let us agree to disagree". Kozlov expressed bland readiness to do so.

At a later point in the talk, after the Berlin and disarmament questions had been discussed, Harriman ironically inquired whether on his trip Kozlov had met any of the ruling clique of capitalists; if he had, would he name them, since he (Harriman) would be very interested to know who they were. We could read in the Soviet press the names of the rulers of the Soviet Union, but it was a mystery who the US businessmen were who allegedly ran this country. "Why", exclaimed Kozlov, leaning over to lay a hand on Harriman's forearm, "should we look farther afield? Here we have a Harriman sitting right in front of us"! He and Menshikov roared with laughter at Harriman's discomfiture. The latter stoutly maintained that neither he, nor Mr. Rockefeller for that matter, wanted war. But Kozlov obviously considered he had come out ahead in that exchange, and returning in the car I overheard from the front seat (where I was sitting with Sukhodrev) much boisterous laughter between Kozlov and Menshikov over the sally.

Harriman recalled that when Eisenhower and Zhukov appeared together at a soccer match in the Dynamo stadium in 1945 and put their arms around each other, the entire stadium had erupted into a roar of approval. Kozlov said this incident illustrated the friendship of the Soviet people for the Americans. Similarly, he said, he had been tremendously moved by the spontaneous, standing ovation given the Russian singers and dancers in Madison Square Garden.

As Kozlov was preparing to leave, Harriman expressed the hope that the Soviet leader was leaving this country with the same warm feelings as Harriman had done on departing the USSR. Kozlov replied that he was convinced that the American people wanted peace, and that he was leaving with the very best feelings in his heart.

2. Eisenhower-Khrushchev meeting

Harriman noted that he and other Americans had recently been suggesting that it would be very useful if Khrushchev were to visit this country. What did Kozlov think of this idea? Kozlov replied that this was a very good idea and that it would without question

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- 3 -

facilitate a Summit meeting. At this point Admiral Kirk broke in to demand, "What kind of a Summit? If only the US and USSR leaders met, the other powers would be highly disturbed and distrustful". Kozlov pointed out that Macmillan's visit had not been misunderstood by the others and that it had been generally recognized that the visit had resulted in some useful proposals. Harriman made clear that he had meant only talks with the President in the course of a Khrushchev visit here, not a special meeting that could be interpreted as a US-USSR Summit. Kirk affirmed that this was the distinction he had tried to get across. Kozlov said that there had never been any confusion in his mind between the two things, and that of course, the distinction was clear. Harriman added that it was Khrushchev's turn to travel since two American presidents had gone to the Soviet Union (Roosevelt and Eisenhower--though before he became President) but that no Soviet premier had ever visited this country. Kozlov said he thought Khrushchev would support this opinion (and returning in the car expressed to Menshikov his amusement that Harriman had included General Eisenhower in his Summit arithmetic).

3. Berlin

Harriman recalled that he had told Khrushchev in Moscow that there was united bipartisan support of our Berlin position and that we were very serious about our obligations to the 2 million West Berliners. Kozlov replied that he remembered these words of Harriman's very well, since he had been present during this part of the conversation, and that he also recalled Khrushchev's emphasis in reply that the USSR would faithfully adhere to the principle of peaceful coexistence. However, it had been surprising to read in the press that Khrushchev had adopted a threatening tone in these talks, because from personal recollection he knew that they had proceeded in a friendly and pleasant atmosphere. Harriman replied that he had not authorized these reports and that he stood behind only those articles he himself wrote (for Life and the New York Times). But, Harriman pursued, what did Kozlov think about the prospects for agreement at Geneva on the Berlin question? Kozlov answered that he took an optimistic view regarding the possibilities for agreement. He had the feeling that the US side was now looking upon the Soviet proposals "more positively". The mixed East-West German commission could have 18 months to work out a solution. Harriman observed that this might be acceptable if there were no alteration of US rights in Berlin in the meantime. Kozlov in an offhand manner said that this was a "technical question" which the Ministers could decide. Harriman pressed him further: this proposal might be agreeable if the Soviets were not in a hurry, but in Berlin they gave the impression that they were. Kozlov denied this, pointing out that 18 months was a not inconsiderable period. Harriman added, "We are ready to wait, and if you think time is on your side, why don't you wait too, while the seeds ripen"? Kozlov: "We are not in a hurry". Harriman: "I gather you want more recognition for the East German

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- 14 -

regime". Kozlov: "The question is not so much recognition, since the East German regime is already recognized by a number of other states, as it is the establishment of security within the GDR and eliminating the provocations stemming from West Berlin". (Harriman later told the reporting officer that he discounted Kozlov's statement on GDR recognition).

4. Disarmament

This topic had been referred to in passing at an early stage in the conversation when Harriman reminded Kozlov of his remark to Khrushchev that if the Democrats were elected in 1960 they would not be satisfied with a national growth rate of only 2%, nor would they be so concerned with balancing the budget; they would spend more to keep up with Soviet missile production. After making this statement, Harriman added, he had the impression Khrushchev was considerably less keen on the Democratic Party. Kozlov merely said something about wasting money over missiles and pointed out that Khrushchev had insisted to Harriman that they liked the Democrats, nevertheless.

In response to Harriman's question, Kozlov said that he thought the disarmament question seemed to be "on better rails" than other questions at issue. Harriman agreed. Confirming a point made by Admiral Kirk, Kozlov said that prohibition of nuclear weapons testing was the first step to the reduction of other types of armaments. Harriman said that there would be more progress in this if the President and Khrushchev got together than if the scientists tried to agree, since scientists were basically inventors and they invented new reasons why previous proposals must be considered unsound. Kozlov said he fully shared this opinion.

5. Harriman's subsequent comments

After accompanying Kozlov to 680 Park Avenue, I returned to check impressions of the meeting with Harriman. He expressed the opinion that Kozlov, in comparison with Stalin and Khrushchev, was "soft". During the talks with Khrushchev Kozlov had stayed very much in the background, as befitted a man 15 years junior to Khrushchev and Mikoyan. Harriman added that Khrushchev chided him for seeking to interview Kirichenko, demanding "Why do you bet on Kirichenko as my successor? He would be very tough on you. If you bet on Kirichenko, you will lose your money". Later Khrushchev said that on one thing he and Mikoyan agreed: Kozlov would succeed him (presumably in the Premiership, though Harriman evidently did not gain clarification on this point).

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